

HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4435) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Chair, I rise today in strong support of the McMorris Rodgers/Bishop amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act. As co-chairs of the Congressional Military Family Caucus, we are committed to supporting military families. Our amendment highlights a growing issue for military spouses: that of unemployment and underemployment.

Military spouses face a unique lifestyle marked by frequent moves, increased family responsibility during deployments, and limited career opportunities in certain geographic locations. These circumstances make it especially tough for those who want to build a portable career that matches their skills, including their education and experience.

According to a recent DoD survey, the unemployment rate for civilians married to a military member is 25 percent—and climbs to 33 percent for spouses of junior enlisted members. In contrast, the average unemployment rate for individuals 20 years and over is 6.1 percent. A recent Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)/Institute for Veterans and Military Families' (IVMF) Military Spouse Employment Report looked beyond unemployment, finding that 9 out of 10 female military spouses who are employed possess more formal education or experience than is needed in their current position. Many spend years obtaining a degree or developing an area of expertise, only to find that they must be relicensed or recertified each time they move across state lines. For medical professionals, nurses, attorneys, teachers, and numerous others, the financial and emotional burden is too much. Their circumstances make it difficult to build a retirement fund, or get the promotion or tenure they would obtain in civilian life.

DoD has demonstrated its commitment to helping military spouses obtain employment by establishing several programs, including the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP), a computer portal that connects companies with military spouses seeking employment. Since MSEP's launch in June 2011, more than 61,000 military spouses have obtained jobs through the program. DoD presently collects data on the number of businesses participating in MSEP and the number of military spouses placed in a job through the program. However, information is not available on the types of jobs obtained and whether they are commensurate with an applicant's experience or education.

Our amendment would require DoD to begin gathering this data, which will equip us to better address the complex employment challenges of military spouses.

I applaud DoD for its significant progress in addressing military spouse unemployment. Yet, we have a continuing responsibility to make sure our programs are as effective as possible. I urge my colleagues to support our amendment to enhance efforts to address military spouse unemployment and underemployment.

IN RECOGNITION OF KATHLEEN McDERMOTT'S RETIREMENT

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2014

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Kathleen J. McDermott, the Executive Director of the Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc. (MOC) a \$17 million anti-poverty community action agency serving North Central Massachusetts. After many many years of dedicated service, Kathy will be enjoying a well-earned retirement.

MOC does incredible work. Their mission is to alleviate poverty and create healthy communities by providing services, coordinating community resources that promote self-sufficiency and advocating for social change. Last year, MOC provided services in 30 communities and served over 20,000 individuals.

Prior to becoming Executive Director, Kathy was the agency's Director of Administration and Finance. During her tenure the agency has developed many new initiatives. MOC is known for addressing the changing needs of the community by planning strategically, using new approaches and collaborating with community partners to build a more vibrant community. Programs the agency administers include Asset Development, ChildCare and Head Start, Youth Services, Education, Training and Employment, Wellness and Nutrition Services, Energy Conservation, Housing, Elder Services, Homelessness Services and Neighborhood Development.

Kathy was instrumental in the establishment of the Community Health Connections Family Health Center, a federally funded health center with sites in Fitchburg, Leominster and Gardner and served as its first President of the Board of Directors.

When Kathy officially retires on August 1st, MOC will have big shoes to fill. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Kathy on her retirement and wishing her the very best in the years ahead.

HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4435) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Chair, in 2011, all of New York's Chinatown suffered a profound loss when Private Danny Chen died in Afghanistan. We did not lose this young man through combat with the enemy. Rather, Danny passed away after enduring horrific abuse and hazing at the hands of others in his unit. After months of being forced to do push-ups while holding water in his mouth, being kicked, called racial slurs and having rocks thrown at him, Danny died while on guard duty.

One of the great tragedies of this case is that Danny's superiors—both enlisted troops and officers—were either complicit with his hazing or turned a blind eye, allowing his abuse to continue. We have to wonder, if Danny Chen had somewhere to turn whether he would still be alive today. If someone else in Danny's unit had been able to speak out—without fear of repercussions—might things have ended differently? Would Danny's parents, Szu Chen and Yao Ten, still have their son?

Unfortunately, hazing remains too common in the military—and often goes unreported. By requiring every branch of the military to establish a tip line where these incidents could be reported, this amendment would help create a zero-tolerance environment for hazing. Not only will this provide help for the servicemember suffering abuse, but it can serve as a powerful deterrent. When potential bullies know inappropriate behavior can be anonymously and safely reported, they will be more cautious.

Madam Chair, no family should have to endure what the Chens have. The brave men and women who serve our Nation risk everything on our behalf. We owe it to them to ensure they operate in a professional environment where everyone is afforded dignity and respect, regardless of background. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the amendment.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CERTIFY IT ACT

HON. STEPHEN LEE FINCHER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2014

Mr. FINCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to be a voice for the employees and owners of small businesses across the United States. The working class men and women who are struggling to make ends meet and who are on the front lines on the war against rising health care costs deserve to know the truth about Obamacare. The truth is Obamacare is hurting small businesses and their employees. Health care costs are rising and Obamacare is causing the problem rather than solving it.

To shed some light on increased health care costs and their impact on America's middle class, I am introducing the Certify It Act. This bill requires the Comptroller General of the United States to annually study, for five years, the impact the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) will have on small business jobs and health care insurance premiums.

This bill would also provide for a one-year delay of the employer mandate, the cornerstone of Obamacare, should the Comptroller General or the Office of Actuary at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

(CMS), determine that Obamacare is causing a net employment loss among small businesses or caused small group health care insurance premiums to rise. Comptroller General would be required to conduct this study every year and the employer mandate would be delayed for every negative finding. In addition, should the Comptroller General or CMS fail to submit a report as specified by this bill, the employer mandate will not apply for the following calendar year.

It is time for the Administration to be honest with the American people. It is time to protect our working class men and women who are going to feel the most negative impacts of Obamacare. The Certify It Act will prove once and for all that Obamacare causes job loss for small business and increases costs to small business health care. Mr. Speaker, it is time to protect the people and increase jobs.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4031, The Department of Veterans Affairs Management Accountability Act of 2014. This bill would give the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) complete authority to fire or demote senior leaders based on performance.

This bill originated from an increasing amount of evidence supporting a lack of management accountability in the department's efforts to curb the disability benefits backlog. Now with the devastating discovery of a growing number of preventable deaths at VA medical centers across the country, this legislation has become more essential.

The department is failing to do its primary job, which is to provide the best health care and benefit services to our veterans. Sadly, the recent reports of mismanagement at VA medical centers only add to the growing list of problems that have plagued the VA. It is time that underperforming senior leaders are held accountable and punished for their poor performance, as opposed to the status quo of ignoring mismanagement practices and rewarding misconduct. Our nation's heroes deserve better.

With the passage of H.R. 4031, this bill would allow for the VA secretary to cut through the mounds of red tape to discipline and remove senior leaders. As an original cosponsor of the bill, I was pleased to see the House take action and pass it with an overwhelming majority. By giving the secretary the direct authority to reprimand leaders it sends a clear message that mismanagement will no longer be tolerated.

The culture at the VA has clearly lost its way and is in need of leadership that can bring back the focus towards its core values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence. These core values have been ignored for too long. It is time to put the interests of America's veterans ahead of the interests of federal bureaucrats so that we keep our promises to the brave men and women

who have protected so much for our freedom and liberty.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE NICARAGUAN CULTURAL COMMITTEE
"JOSE DE LA CRUZ MENA"

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2014

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Nicaraguan Cultural Committee "Jose de la Cruz Mena," and salute them for the wonderful cultural efforts they are producing for the residents of the City of Los Angeles.

Founded in 2010, the Nicaraguan Cultural Committee "Jose de la Cruz Mena" is a small but dedicated organization committed to raising awareness on the traditions and customs of Nicaraguans who reside in the City of Los Angeles.

Since music is fundamental to Nicaraguan culture and spirit, the committee opted to be named after Jose de la Cruz Mena, a pioneering artist who was the first to introduce classical music to Central America. Although he suffered from various illnesses that left him blind at the age of 22 and led to a premature death at the age of 33, de la Cruz Mena's special talent allowed him to participate in composing the Nicaraguan national anthem. The committee is honoring his legacy by sharing his story and music with Angelinos.

To increase appreciation for Nicaraguan music and culture, the committee successfully encouraged the City of Los Angeles and the State of California to officially recognize May 3rd as "Dia del Nicaraguense" (Nicaraguan Day). The Nicaraguan Cultural Committee celebrated this distinct recognition on May 4 by hosting the first Nicaraguan Folklore Festival in Pico Union where many Americans of Nicaraguan descent have lived since the 1980s. The festival highlighted special Nicaraguan traditions and featured artisan crafts from Nicaragua. To foster cultural exchange, the committee plans to host the Nicaraguan Folklore Festival annually.

I wish the Nicaraguan Cultural Committee "Jose de la Cruz Mena" continued success in its efforts to preserve and highlight Nicaraguan traditions!

IN MEMORY OF NEVIN WHITESIDE,
JR.

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2014

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this month Lexington County recognized the service of Nevin Whiteside, Jr., as a proud Navy veteran of the Korean War. The following obituary was provided by Caughman-Harmon funeral Home, Lexington Chapel.

Funeral services for Nevin "Neb" William Whiteside, Jr., 84, of Lexington, will be held at 2:00 p.m. Friday, May 2, 2014 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, with interment in the church cemetery. The family will receive friends on Thursday, May 1, 2014 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00

p.m. at Caughman-Harman Funeral Home, Lexington Chapel. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 1130 St. Peter's Church Rd., Lexington, SC 29072. Mr. Whiteside was born November 28, 1929 in Leesville, SC and passed away on April 30, 2014. He was the son of the late Nevin William Whiteside and Bertie Earle Whiteside. Mr. Whiteside served our country in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. He retired from Kenan Transportation. He was a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, VFW and Lexington Masonic Lodge 152. He loved to ride his Harley-Davidson and enjoyed working in the yard and cleaning his car. Mr. Whiteside is survived by his wife, Barbara "Bobbie" Sox Whiteside, of Lexington; sons, Stan and Wayne Whiteside of Lexington; daughter, Kim (Tim) French of Lexington; grandchildren, Lauren, Andrew, and Brandon Whiteside, Ashley (Bower) Butler and Malia and Devin French; great-grandchildren, Reece and Paxton Butler; sister, Doris Goff of Saluda and man's best friend "Bandit", (Poppy's Lil' Buddy). He is predeceased by his parents and his brother Horace Whiteside.

HONORING THE LIFE OF A MINNESOTA LEGEND: CONGRESSMAN
JAMES L. OBERSTAR

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2014

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, on May 3, 2014, our former House colleague and dear friend, Chairman Jim Oberstar, passed away. Congressman Oberstar served Minnesota and the families of the 8th Congressional District from 1975 to 2011, including four years as chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Prior to being elected, Jim served in the U.S. House for eleven years as a senior staff member on the Public Works Committee.

When I arrived in Congress in 2001, Jim Oberstar was the "dean" of our Minnesota congressional delegation. He was like a big brother to me. A brilliant legislator and a profoundly gifted man, Jim was also a very kind man, a true gentleman with a huge heart and a hearty laugh.

When I think of Jim and the ten years we served together, I remember a man who loved his family and made sure I always saw the latest photos of his grandchildren. He loved his work as a national leader and true expert on transportation and infrastructure issues. And, Jim Oberstar loved Minnesota and representing northern Minnesota's families in the House of Representatives.

Throughout his career Jim's commitment to improving America's transportation system saved thousands of lives, kept millions of Americans on the job, and strengthened Minnesota's and our nation's economy. During his tenure as chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Jim Oberstar was one of the most powerful men in America. He moved legislation and with his work on American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Jim Oberstar ensured millions of Americans stayed on the job and thousands of infrastructure projects were completed across our country.